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| Course title: Global Environmental History | | | | |
| Course code: NRE 107 | | No. of credits: 2 | L-T-P: | Learning hours: 28 |
| Pre-requisite course code and title (if any): | | | | |
| Department: Department of Energy and Environment | | | | |
| Course coordinator(s): | | | Course instructor(s): Dr Mart Stewart | |
| Contact details: Mart.Stewart@wwu.edu | | | | |
| Course type: | | Course offered in: Semester 3 | | |
| Course Description | | | | |
| <p>This course will study the history of several processes that have shaped environments, environmental problems, and the responses to them on a global scale. It takes for granted that natural environments, how people have lived in them, and how humans and natural environments have developed relationships with each other (for better or for worse) have <i>evolved</i> – in other words, that they have had a <i>history</i>, and that the past is prologue to the present. It will examine first of all the historical process by which organisms have been transported from one place to another on the globe by humans (whether by design or by accident), and the significance of these transfers. We will then look at how ideas about the environment have also been transported from one culture to another, applied either as an imperial overlay or as a creole hybrid, and what this has meant for local environments and those living in them. The seminar will look at literature that studies out how the exchange of biological organisms, the transfer of ideas about the environment, and the development of transnational environmental issues and policies intersect—and what we can learn by by studying environmental history in this way in the first place.</p> | | | | |
| Course objectives | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide an overview of significant historical processes that have shaped environments and environmental science and policy on a global scale. ▪ To develop student skills in analyzing the historical context and content of environmental processes and problems. | | | | |
| Course content | | | | |
| SNo | Topic | L | T | P |
| 1. | Introduction: Exchanges, Environmental History, and the Meaning of “Global” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the interdisciplinary and international field of environmental history ▪ Overview of “biological exchange” as an organizing theme in environmental history research ▪ Introduction to different meanings of “global,” questions of geographical scale, and different models for global historical inquiry | | | |
| 2. | Corn, Chickens, Germs: Biological Exchanges and Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biological “imperialism,” the exchange of organisms, from one continent to another, both intentional and accidental, and the biological consequences ▪ With corn, chickens, disease microorganisms and other case studies | | | |
| 3. | Science, Colonization, and the Exchange of Plants and Animals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The evolution of the “sciences of nature” in tandem with colonization and imperialism. ▪ The history of botanical gardens and “animal gardens” or zoos as laboratories – and current controversies about animal rights ▪ Global circuits of science and the study of nature and India’s contribution | | | |
| 4. | What is “Native”? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the evolution of ideas about “native” and “invasive” species ▪ The changing meaning of “indigenous” and “native” understandings of nature – in conflict with or in partnership with “modern” and scientific understandings of nature. ▪ Models of “development” and the problem of the “native” Indigenous cities? | | | |
| 5. | Energy and Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The history of organisms and energy ▪ Mining environmental change and organisms of the past: the evolution of the addiction to fossil fuels ▪ Using plants as models: solar energy and new models of energy generation | | | |

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| 6. | Climate Change, Global Circulation, and new models of environmental understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The discovery of global warming, the science of emergent diseases, and global understandings of nature ▪ The problem of cross-boundary environmental governance – managing the environment, this time without imperialism. ▪ Institutional development and the global circulation of knowledge | | | |
| 7. | The End of Nature? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the idea of the Anthropocene and new understandings of the agency of nature ▪ Dipesh Chakrabarty and “species history” – neo-colonialism or a path to a global environmental history for the future? | | | |
| | Total | | | |
| Evaluation criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mid-point exam or assessment: 20% ▪ Final exam: 25% ▪ Discussion and participation: 25% ▪ Presentation and paper: 30% | | | | |
| Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will develop an understanding of the usefulness of a historical approach to environmental problems, and a toolbox for doing so. ▪ 2. Students will develop interdisciplinary skills and skills in cross-cultural inquiry | | | | |
| Pedagogical approach Lectures, discussion of readings and case studies, in-class mini-workshops, student presentations | | | | |
| Textbooks Required Ramachandra Guha: <i>Environmentalism: A Global History</i> (Pearson, 1999). John McNeil: <i>Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World</i> (W.W. Norton, 2001) In addition, several shorter readings will be assigned on a week-by-week basis, with pdfs supplied by the instructor. | | | | |
| Suggested readings Sunil S. Amrith, <i>Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants</i> (Harvard University Press, 2013). Amita Baviskar, ‘Environmental History in India’ in Bharati Ray (ed.), <i>Different Types of History</i> (Pearson Educational Publishing, 2008), 147-62. Amita Baviskar, <i>In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley</i> (Oxford University Press, second edition, 2004) William Beinart and Karen Middleton, “Plant Transfers in Historical Perspective: A Review Article,” <i>Environment and History</i> 10 (2004): 3-29. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses” <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 35 (Winter 2009): 197-222. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Human Agency in the Anthropocene,” <i>AHA Perspectives</i> (Dec. 2012) William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in William Cronon, ed., <i>Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature</i> (Norton, 1996). Alfred Crosby, <i>Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900</i> (Cambridge, any edition). Richard Grove, <i>Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860</i> (Cambridge, 1996). Ramachandra Guha, <i>The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Western Himalaya</i> (Oxford University Press, 2 nd ed, 2000). Joshua Howe, <i>Behind the Curve: Science and the Politics of Global Warming</i> (University of Washington Press, 2014). Jim McCann, “Maize and Grace: History, Corn, and Africa’s New Landscapes, 1500-1999,” <i>Comparative Study of Society and History</i> (2002): 246-72. Pamela McElwee, “You Say Illegal, I Say Legal: The Relationship Between ‘Illegal’ Logging and Land Tenure, Poverty, and Forest Use Rights in Vietnam,” <i>Journal of Sustainable Forestry</i> , Vol. 19, No. 1/2/3, 2004 . http://www.haworthpress.com/web/JSF | | | | |

Linda Nash, "The Agency of Nature and the Nature of Agency," *Environmental History* (2004).
Mahesh Rangarajan, K. Sivaramakrishnan, eds. *Shifting Ground: People, Mobility, and Animals in India's Environmental Histories* (Oxford University Press, 2014).
Nigel Rothfelds, *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002)
Paul Sutter, "What Can U.S. Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Historiography?" *Environmental History* 8 (2003): 109-129.
Richard Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (Concise Rev. Ed., 2007).
Spencer Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming* (Harvard University Press, 2003).

Case studies
Websites
Journals

Additional information (if any)

Student responsibilities

The students are expected to submit assignments in time and come prepared with readings when provided.

Course Reviewers